as they enfolded each other in soft towels to dry.

"There is some wine over there," Spock said lazily from the window sill where he was sitting, combing his hair into a shining helmet of black silk. Kirk turned, and the Vulcan added. "You no longer need the towel, Jim."

Grinning, Kirk tossed the towel aside and walked over to pour the wine, knowing that Spock was studying his naked body with appreciation, and enjoying the awareness of the dark eyes that explored him.

"Only one goblet, Jim?" Spock raised a surprised eyebrow as Kirk handed him the cup.

"I prefer to share yours." An arm encircled his waist and pulled him down to sit on Spock's lap. Kirk started nervously, glancing out of the window. "Is is safe, Spock? If anyone was in the courtyard and saw me uncollared..."

"No danger, Jim. The garden is mine, and no slave will enter it when I am in these rooms. Now drink."

They shared the wine, taking it in turns to sip from the cup, each making a game of setting his lips to the exact spot where the other's had rested moments before. At last Kirk set the cup down.

"I think...we'd better be getting back to bed, Spock."

The Vulcan glanced down at the Human in his arms, and his smile broadened. "I see the necessity I believe." Reluctantly he allowed the Human to stand, then caught his arm and turned him back to face his still-seated master.

"What is it, Spock?"

The Vulcan didn't answer at once, instead he let his hands roam lightly over the Human's body--arms, chest, belly, thighs.

"I was just remembering," Spock said after a few moments. "I thought you beautiful when I first saw you, but now--you are stronger, fitter, your body exquisitely combining the strength of a warrior and the charms of a pleasure slave. You are indeed perfect, Jim."

"Thank you, and I can return the compliment. But I'd far rather do it in bed!"

Spock laughed and allowed Kirk to pull him to his feet. As they returned to the bed, they passed by the table.

"We've forgotten something." The golden collar glinted in his hand.

"Not yet, Jim." Firmly Spock took it from him and dropped it back onto the table. "In the morning will be time enough. Let us have this night at least, with not even the symbol of compulsion between us."

Returning to the bed, Spock lay down and opened his arms, smiling up at Kirk with anticipation. The Human bent and kissed him, then joined him on the bed, running his hands teasingly over the thighs that parted at his touch. The fire was building again, scorching his nerves, his penis swelling at the mere sight of Spock's body offered to him. He reached for the small opening, then hesitated and stretched himself full length upon Spock, trapping his penis between their bodies. He began to pump himself against Spock, suddenly afraid that further violent penetration might damage his inexperienced lover as he had been damaged by Savak, but the contact was not enough, and he moaned in anguish, fighting the temptation to seek the tight heat his body demanded.

"Use me, Jim," Spock urged. "There is no peace for me while you are yet unsatisfied."

"I can't--hurt you," Kirk gasped as he ground his belly against Spock's, and the Vulcan read his reasons in his mind.

"Then use my mouth."

Strong hands guided him to kneel astride Spock's chest and the insistent mouth took him, sucking deliciously. Kirk thrust into the moist warmth, his powerful hips driving his aching penis deep into Spock's throat. A curious mixture of violence and tenderness filled him, enabling him to understand at last why Spock used him with such urgency, and the restraint his lover must have used not to hurt him.

In that moment he knew that there were no regrets left. If his life was offered to him again, there was nothing he would change. Even the humiliation he had endured at Savak's hands had in some measure contributed to the totality of his commitment to Spock. As for the future--that would come as and when it would. They both had difficult parts to play in the days that lay ahead, but the prize for success was this essence of utter love and belonging. And one day, perhaps, on some world neither of them had yet seen, it might be possible....

His body convulsed, his semen filling the Vulcan's mouth, and he felt the movement of muscles in Spock's throat as he swallowed greedily. Kirk's hips thrust as he pounded frantically, calling Spock's name again and again until it seemed his whole body had dissolved and poured down the Vulcan's throat.

When it was over he collapsed helplessly, unalbe to move. Strong arms settled him comfortably, holding him close, and he buried his face in Spock's neck.

"I'm sorry," he whispered, "I wanted to be gentle, to give you pleasure...."

"You did, Jim." Spock's voice was husky with content. "I foresaw the intensity of your need--I am glad of it."

"How can you be? I must have hurt you."

"And so enabled me to share your pain. Now that you have experienced the urgency of the mating fever, perhaps you can understand how it is for me. Such need does not permit gentleness, but you taught me passion, showed me at last what it is like to belong completely to a lover. There will be time for tenderness, too. But for now...you should sleep."

"I can't...not yet." Kirk reached down to stroke the Vulcan's throbbing penis. "You need me now."

"Jim, I can...."

"Please, Spock. I need to do this."

Yielding to the pleasing in the Human's tone, Spock laid Kirk down and stretched himself upon the cool, naked body. Kirk's legs parted, he raised his hips, offering himself, and Spock slid